Act, 1909 was enacted to remove doubts as to the validity of marriage ceremony common among Sikhs. The said Act does not lay down any substantive law with respect to registration of marriages. Sikhs are considered as Hindus under the Hindu Marriage Act, 1955 which provides for registration of a Hindu Marriage. Section 8 of Hindu Marriage Act, 1955 has empowered the State Governments to make rules relating to registration of marriages, and as such, State Government regulates the registration of Sikh marriages under the provisions of Hindu Marriage Act, 1955.

National Conference of Law Ministers and Law Secretaries

821. SHRI RAVULA CHANDRA SEKAR REDDY: Will the Minister of LAW AND JUSTICE be pleased to state:

(a) whether the National Conference of Law Ministers and Law Secretaries was held recently;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) the outcome thereof;

(d) whether his Ministry had also called for comments from the States on the Bill regarding establishment of gram Nyayalayas or village courts across the country to provide justice at the grassroot level;

(e) if so, the response of each States received so far; and

(f) the action taken thereon?

THE MINISTER OF LAW AND JUSTICE (SHRI H.R. BHARDWAJ): (a) to (c) The Ministry of Law and Justice convened a National Conference of Law Ministers and Law Secretaries at Vigyan Bhawan, New Delhi on 18th December, 2005 to consider the proposal for a Parliamentary legislation to set up Gram Nyayalayas in the country. The Conference favoured a legislation giving access to speedy and inexpensive justice at the grassroots level to the common man and accordingly adopted a Resolution, a copy of which is placed as Statement (*See* below). The proposal is at inter-ministerial consultation stage.

(d) In view of holding of National Conference of Law Ministers and Law Secretaries no separate reference to the State Governments has been made.

(e) and (f) Do not arise in view of the reply to part (d) above.

Statement

Resolution

This National Conference of Law Ministers and Law Secretaries in its Meeting held at Vigyan Bhawan, New Delhi, on today, the 18th December, 2005 does hereby appreciate the initiative taken by the Union Ministry of Law and Justice to introduce a legislation giving access to speedy and inexpensive justice at the grassroots level to the common man and also resolves that the Gram Nyayalayas Bill, 2005 as discussed in the Conference should be processed for its early enactment after considering the suggestions placed by the various State Law Ministers and Law Secretaries including the funding to such Gram Nyayalayas.

Cases pending in courts

822. SHRIMATI JAYA BACHCHAN: Will the Minister of LAW AND JUSTICE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that more than 34 lakh cases were pending in various courts by the middle of 2004;

(b) if so, the current figures in this regard; and

(c) whether Government propose to ensure disposal of these cases in a time bound programme and if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF LAW AND JUSTICE (SHRI K. VENKATAPATHY): (a) Yes, Madam.

(b) At present there are 33,635 cases in Supreme Court, 33,41,040 cases in High Courts and 2,53,06,458 cases in Subordinate Courts reported to be pending.

(c) Time bound disposal of cases is within the exclusive domain of judiciary. However, in order to reduce pendency of cases Government has initiated a number of measures which include, timely filling the vacancies of judges, increasing the judge strength, grouping of cases,